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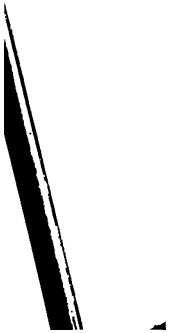

The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln

The Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln

SELECTED AND EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

TEMPLE SCOTT

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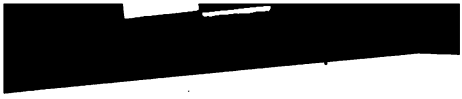
INTRODUCTION



PROGRESS, civilization, advancement, are terms often employed by orators, politicans, and demagogues to flatter us into a belief that the forces which these expressions connote are initiated, guided, and directed by humanity as a whole. They would have us understand that a mass of humanity called a nation does consciously and determinedly set out on an enterprise which is progressive, advancing, and enlightening to itself; they pander to the common mind by ascribing to it qualities of foresight and initiation, and by praising it for sustaining noble enthusiasms for its own salvation. If there be one thing more than any other which history teaches us it is that such progress and development are due, not to the efforts of a nation as a whole, but to the creating will of a few single individuals who, from time to time, have been precipitated, so to speak, from the flux and flow of the mass, and have focussed in themselves those forces which their prophetic souls sensed to be progressive and civilizing, and who have dared greatly and highly to direct *them.* Such are the men who come

of themselves so long as they ..
turning the face of the people to the ligl
saw afar off.

They were, of course, the product o
age, and had it not been for the con
which gave them their birth and chan
would have remained "mute inglorio
tons." For these formative conditio
for this chance mankind is responsib
deserves the credit; but for the great
for the incarnated Word of the Spirit
Time, for the noble courage to dare
do; for these we are given heroes, a
tains of the soul, and masters of m
such was Abraham Lincoln.

The state of this country in the

was as that of a god embalmed. It required another sacrifice of blood to rouse it into creative activity. The sacrifice was offered on the field of Gettysburg and in the Valley of the Shenandoah; and the god lived again in the thin, worn frame of Abraham Lincoln.

This lowly-born, uncultured son of the soil came later to stand, like Saul of Israel, head and shoulders above the rest of the people. Like Saul, also, he had gone abroad from home seeking for his father's asses, and found a kingdom instead. This time, however, the choice of the people was truer than that of the prophet. The people took a large chance, but having chosen him they stood by their choice and responded to his call. The result proved their wisdom; and he, to-day, who would conjure with a name would choose first that of the wise, gentle, brave, resolute leader who is to us the very incarnation of the finest spirit of *American* patriotism.

[redacted]

The work Abraham Lincoln was called
on to do took on a threefold expression.
had to find the right way out; he had to
vince the people that the way he had found
s the right way; and he had to master the
n who were to help him along the way.
accomplish the first was to be a statesman
the rarest insight into national affairs; to
ieve the second was to be an orator of the
hest order; and to succeed in the third
s to be a born leader and a master of men.
Rarely in the history of human activity,
l certainly never in the history of the
ierican people, were such qualities of char-
er and mind demanded of one man. To
that these demands were amply fulfilled
Lincoln is to rank him with the great men
:he world, and to place him first and fore-
st among the leaders of his own country;
l in saying it we do but justly appreciate
spirit and character of this man.

This little volume is devoted to one only
:he expressions of Lincoln's activities—the
rary expression, though with Lincoln
k an oratorical form necessarily. Lin

cannot be called a "man of letters" in any accepted sense of that phrase; he used language not as an art for itself, but as a means for the perfection of an entirely different art —the art of moving men. In his use of words, in his setting of them, he produced some compositions which are now accepted as literature; but these productions were the work not of a literary artist, but of a highly moved and highly resolved practical man. In this sense they might be taken as the language of inspiration; in another sense, however, they bear delicate and sure testimony to Lincoln's purity of soul and honesty of high purpose. Only a man exalted in spirit as was Lincoln; only a man so charged with a fine sense of the sacredness of responsibility; only a soul so fixed in lonely meditation over the stupendous problems before him; only such a man could, unaided by the practice of culture, speak so perfectly and so faultlessly as he did. The Gettysburg speech, the conclusion of the Second Inaugural Address, the letters to General Hooker and Mr. J. C. Conkling read as if they were the language of a wise man

acquainted with grief. The peculiar quality of Lincoln's literary labors, if such work as he did in this respect can be properly so classified, lies in the fact that they show the man himself. It is not a literary artist who is writing; it is a practical genius in the affairs of life speaking simply and directly from the fulness of his experience and knowledge. Just because of this quality does Lincoln's writings appeal so strongly. The marvel is that they are at the same time so finished and so perfect. The body of his work is not large, and much of what has been collected are in the forms of letters and speeches at debates with Douglas, where style is subservient to the purpose of the compositions. But even in these the wizardry of the natural orator compels a homage to its moving power. The wisdom of the man was profound in its grasp of the possibilities of human relations whether between individuals or as a nation. Lincoln knew men so truly that, when we remember his power as President, it is to his high praise that he used his knowledge to their doing *and not to their* undoing. He inspired them

to noble deeds and upheld them to exalted purposes. His country was the object of so pure a worship from him that his life is one sacrifice to its honor; and that life remains today to instill in us that spirit of *noblesse oblige* which nobly sustains each and every true member of our American Democracy, and places us, with him, among the aristocrats in honor.

TEMPLE SCOTT.

JMAN NATURE AND CHARACTER

say, for one, that I have no other ob-
as that of being truly esteemed of my
men, by rendering myself worthy of
esteem. How far I shall succeed in
ring this ambition is yet to be developed.
young and unknown to many of you. I
orn, and have ever remained, in the most
le walks of life. I have no wealthy or
ar relations or friends to recommend me.
ase is thrown exclusively upon the inde-
ent voters of the country; and, if elected,
will have conferred a favor upon me for
I shall be unremitting in my labors to
ensate. But, if the good people in
wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the
round. I have been too familiar with

was a free country; and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity, and glory because he saw in such the advancement, prosperity, and glory of human liberty, human right, and human nature. He desired the prosperity of his countrymen partly because they were his countrymen, but chiefly to show to the world that free men could be prosperous.

Eulogy on Henry Clay. Springfield, Ill. July 1, 1852.

I HAVE placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what seemed to me

you do not mix politics with your profe
in which you are right. You have confi
in yourself, which is a valuable if n
indispensable quality. You are ambi
which, within reasonable bounds, does
rather than harm; but I think that d
General Burnside's command of the
you have taken counsel of your ambitio
thwarted him as much as you could, in
you did a great wrong to the country
to a most meritorious and honorable br
officer. I have heard, in such a way
believe it, of your recently saying that
the army and the government needed
tator. Of course it was not for this, b
spite of it, that I have given you the comn
Only those generals who gain successe
set up dictators. What I now ask of y
military success, and I will risk the dic
ship. The government will support y
the utmost of its ability, which is neither
nor less than it has done and will do f
commanders. I much fear that the
that you have aided to infuse into the
of criticising their commander and withh

confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Letter to General Hooker. Jan. 26, 1863.

Pioneers not Destined to Gather the Fruits of the Harvest.

IT is generally the case that a man who begins a work is not the best man to carry it on to a successful termination. I believe it was so in the case of Moses—wasn't it?—who got the children of Israel out of Egypt, but the Lord selected somebody else to bring them to their journey's end. A pioneer has hard work to do, and generally gets so battered and spattered that people prefer another man, though they may accept the principle.

Reply to Delegation asking for the Appointment of Fremont to the Governorship North Carolina.

IN this extraordinary war, extraordinary developments have manifested themselves such as have not been seen in former wars; and amongst these manifestations nothing has been more remarkable than these fairs for the relief of suffering soldiers and their families. And the chief agents in these fairs are the women of America.

I am not accustomed to the use of language of eulogy; I have never studied the art of paying compliments to women; but I must say, that if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war. I will close by saying God bless the women of America.

Remarks on Closing a Sanitary Fair in Washington. March 18, 1864.

YOU say your husband is a religious man; tell him when you meet him that I say I am not much of a judge of religion, but that, in my opinion, the religion that gets men to rebel and fight against their own govern-

ment, because, as they think, that government does not sufficiently help some men to eat their bread in the sweat of other men's faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to heaven.

Advice to a lady from Tennessee. Dec. 3, 1864.

CONDUCT AND LIFE

WHEN the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and true maxim "that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." So with men. If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what he will, is the great highroad to his reason, and which, when once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing his judgment of the justice of your cause, if indeed that cause be really a just one. On the contrary, assume to dictate to his judgment, or to command his action, or to mark him as one to be shunned or despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all the avenues to his head and his heart; and though your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance, harder than steel, and sharper than steel can be made, and though you throw it with more than herculean force and precision, you shall be no more able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye

straw. Such is man, and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interests.

An address before the Washington Society of Springfield, Ill. Feb. 22, 1842.

Posterity has done nothing for us. We must Work for the Present

FEW can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity; and none will do it enthusiastically. Posterity has done nothing for us; and theorize on it as we may, practically we shall do very little for it, unless we are made to think we are at the same time doing something for ourselves.

What an ignorance of human nature does it exhibit to ask or expect a whole community to rise up and labor for the temporal happiness of others, after themselves shall be consigned to the dust, a majority of which community take no pains whatever to secure their own eternal welfare at no more distant day? Great distance in either time or space ha wonderful power to lull and render quiesc the human mind. Pleasures to be enjove pains to be endured, after we shall *and gone, are* but little regarded ev

own cases, and much less in the cases of others. Still, in addition to this there is something so ludicrous in promises of good or threats of evil a great way off as to render the whole subject with which they are connected easily turned into ridicule. "Better lay down that spade you are stealing, Paddy; if you don't you'll pay for it at the day of judgment." "Be the powers, if ye'll credit me so long I'll take another jist."

Address before the Washington Society of Springfield, Ill. Feb. 22, 1842.

The Temperance Revolution

TURN now to the temperance revolution. In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed; in it, more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it no orphans starving, no widows weeping. By it, none wounded in feeling, none injured in interest; even the dram-maker and dram-seller will have glided into other occupations so gradually as never to have felt the change, and will stand ready to join all others in the universal song of gladness. And what

draughts of perfect liberty. Happy when—all appetites controlled, all pois subdued, all matter subjected — mind, conquering mind, shall live and move, monarch of the world. Glorious cons mation! Hail, fall of fury! Reign of rea all hail!

Address before the Washington Societ Springfield, Ill. Feb. 22, 1842.

I AM not an accomplished lawyer. I quite as much material for a lectu those points wherein I have failed, as in t wherein I have been moderately succe The leading rule for the lawyer, as for the

aining to it which can then be done. When you bring a common-law suit, if you have the facts for doing so, write the declaration at once. If a law point be involved, examine the books, and note the authority you rely on upon the declaration itself, where you are sure to find it when wanted. The same of defenses and pleas. In business not likely to be litigated—ordinary collection cases, foreclosures, partitions, and the like—make all examinations of titles, and note them, and even draft orders and decrees in advance. This course has a triple advantage; it avoids omissions and neglect, saves your labor when once done, performs the labor out of court when you have leisure, rather than in court when you have not. Extemporaneous speaking should be practised and cultivated. It is the lawyer's avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech. And yet there is not a more fatal error to young lawyers than relying too much on speech-making. If any one, upon his rare powers of speaking, shall

Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.

The matter of fees is important, far beyond the mere question of bread and butter involved. Properly attended to, fuller justice is done to both lawyer and client. An exorbitant fee should never be claimed. As a general rule never take your whole fee in advance, nor any more than a small retainer. When fully paid beforehand, you are more

than a common mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case, as if something was still in prospect for you, as well as for your client. And when you lack interest in the case the job will very likely lack skill and diligence in the performance. Settle the amount of fee and take a note in advance. Then you will feel that you are working for something, and you are sure to do your work faithfully and well. Never sell a fee note—at least not before the consideration service is performed. It leads to negligence and dishonesty—negligence by losing interest in the case, and dishonesty in refusing to refund when you have allowed the consideration to fail.

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest. I say vague, because when we consider to what extent confidence and honors are reposed in and conferred upon lawyers by the people, it appears improbable that their impression of dishonesty is very distinct and vivid. Yet the impression is common, almost universal. Let no young man choosing the law for a calling *for a moment* yield to the popular belief—

memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

First Inaugural Address. March 4, 1861.

A Time for Silence

SOLOMON says that there is "a time to keep silence," and when men wrangle by the mouth with no certainty that they mean *the same thing* while using the same word, it

perhaps were as well if they would keep silence.

Address to the Legislature of Indiana. Feb. 12, 1861.

"Act well your Part, there all the Honor lies"

HE who does *something* at the head of one regiment will eclipse him who does *nothing* at the head of a hundred.

Letter to Maj.-Gen. Hunter. Dec. 31, 1861.

The Real Victory

THE one victory we can ever call complete will be that one which proclaims that there is not one slave or one drunkard on the face of God's green earth. Recruit for this victory. . . . Now, boy, on your march, don't you go and forget the old maxim that "one drop of honey catches more flies than a half-gallon of gall." Load your musket with this maxim, and smoke it in your pipe.

Letter to George E. Pickett. Feb., 1842.

The Gift of Speech

THE inclination to exchange thoughts with one another is probably an original impulse of our nature. If I be in pain, I wish

to let you know it, and to ask your sympathy and assistance; and my pleasurable emotions I also wish to communicate to and share with you. But to carry on such communications, some instrumentality is indispensable. Accordingly, speech—articulate sounds rattled off from the tongue—was used by our first parents, and even by Adam before the creation of Eve. He gave names to the animals while she was still a bone in his side; and he broke out quite volubly when she first stood before him, the best present of his Maker. From this it would appear that speech was not an invention of man, but rather the direct gift of his Creator. But whether divine gift or invention, it is still plain that if a mode of communication had been left to invention, speech must have been the first, from the superior adaptation to the end of the organs of speech over every other means within the whole range of nature. Of the organs of speech the tongue is the principal; and if we shall test it, we shall find the capacities of the tongue, i the utterance of articulate sounds, absolute *wonderful.* You can count from one to or

hundred quite distinctly in about forty seconds. In doing this two hundred and eighty-three distinct sounds or syllables are uttered, being seven to each second, and yet there should be enough difference between every two to be easily recognized by the ear of the hearer. What other signs to represent things could possibly be produced so rapidly, or, even if ready made, could be arranged so rapidly to express the sense? Motions with the hands are no adequate substitute. Marks for the recognition of the eye—writing—although a wonderful auxiliary of speech, is no worthy substitute for it. In addition to the more slow and laborious process of getting up a communication in writing, the materials—pen, ink, and paper—are not always at hand. But one always has his tongue with him, and the breath of his life is the ever-ready material with which it works. Speech, then, by enabling different individuals to interchange thought, and thereby to combine their powers of observation and reflection, greatly facilitates useful discoveries and inventions. What one observes, and would himself infer nothing from,

he tells to another, and that other at once sees a valuable hint in it. A result is thus reached which neither alone would have arrived at. And this reminds me of what I passed unnoticed before, that the very first invention was a joint operation, Eve having shared with Adam the getting up of the apron. And, indeed, judging from the fact that sewing has come down to our times as "woman's work," it is very probable she took the leading part—he, perhaps, doing no more than to stand by and thread the needle. That proceeding may be reckoned as the mother of all "sewing societies," and the first and most perfect "World's Fair," all inventions and inventors then in the world being on the spot.

Delivered before the Springfield Library Association, Springfield, Ill. Feb. 22, 1860.

The Arts of Writing and Printing

I HAVE already intimated my opinion that in the world's history certain inventions and discoveries occurred of peculiar value, on account of their great efficiency in facilitating *all other* inventions and discoveries. Of these

were the art of writing and of printing, the discovery of America, and the introduction of patent laws. The date of the first, as already stated, is unknown; but it certainly was as much as fifteen hundred years before the Christian era; the second—printing—came in 1436, or nearly three thousand years after the first. The others followed more rapidly—the discovery of America in 1492, and the first patent laws in 1624. Though not apposite to my present purpose, it is but justice to the fruitfulness of that period to mention two other important events—the Lutheran Reformation in 1517, and, still earlier, the invention of negroes, or of the present mode of using them, in 1434. But to return to the consideration of printing, it is plain that it is but the other half, and in reality the better half, of writing; and that both together are but the assistants of speech in the communication of thoughts between man and man. When man was possessed of speech alone, the chances of invention, discovery, and improvement were very limited; but by the introduction of each of these they were greatly

The Arts of Writing and Printing

reflected upon by a much greater nun
persons; and thereby the chances of a v:
hint being caught proportionately augm
By this means the observation of a
individual might lead to an important
tion years, and even centuries, after h
dead. In one word, by means of writi
seeds of invention were more perma
preserved and more widely sown. And
three thousand years, during which pr
remained undiscovered after writing w
use, it was only a small portion of the
who could write, or read writing; and
sequently the field of invention

come all at once. It required time to bring them out; and they are still coming. The capacity to read could not be multiplied as fast as the means of reading. Spelling-books just began to go into the hands of the children, but the teachers were not very numerous or very competent, so that it is safe to infer they did not advance so speedily as they do nowadays. It is very probable—almost certain—that the great mass of men at that time were utterly unconscious that their condition or their minds were capable of improvement. They not only looked upon the educated few as superior beings, but they supposed themselves to be naturally incapable of rising to equality. To emancipate the mind from this false underestimate of itself is the great task which printing came into the world to perform. It is

difficult for us now and here to conceive how strong this slavery of the mind was, and how long it did of necessity take to break its shackles, and to get a habit of freedom of thought established. It is, in this connection, a curious fact that a new country is most favorable—almost necessary—to the emancipation of thought, and the consequent advancement of civilization and the arts. The human family originated, as is thought, somewhere in Asia, and have worked their way principally westward. Just now in civilization and the arts the people of Asia are entirely behind those of Europe; those of the east of Europe behind those of the west of it; while we here in America think we discover, and invent, and improve faster than any of them. They may think this is arrogance; but they cannot deny that Russia has called on us to show her how to build steamboats and railroads, while in the older parts of Asia they scarcely know that such things as steamboats and railroads exist. In anciently inhabited countries, the dust of ages—a real, downright *old-fogyism*—seems to settle upon and smother

the intellect and energies of man. It is in this view that I have mentioned the discovery of America as an event greatly favoring and facilitating useful discoveries and inventions. Next came the patent laws. These began in England in 1624, and in this country with the adoption of our Constitution. Before then any man (might) instantly use what another man had invented, so that the inventor had no special advantage from his invention. The patent system changed this, secured to the inventor for a limited time exclusive use of his inventions, and thereby added the fuel of interest to the fire of genius in the discovery and production of new and useful things.

Delivered before the Springfield Library Association, Springfield, Ill. Feb. 22, 1860.

The Inspiration of the Dead for the Living

FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now *we are* engaged in a great civil war,

The Inspiration of the Dead for the Living

testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated, to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that *these* dead shall not have died in vain—that

this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Address at Gettysburg. Nov. 19, 1863.

Truth, your Best Friend

NEVER encourage deceit and falsehood, especially if you have got a bad memory; it is the *worst* enemy a fellow can have. The fact is, truth is your truest friend, no matter what the circumstances are.

Letter to George E. Pickett. Feb., 1842.

Our Work for the Future

FEW can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity, and none will do it enthusiastically. Posterity has done nothing for us; and, theorize on it as we may, practically we shall do very little for it, unless we are made to think we are at the same time doing something for ourselves.

What an ignorance of human nature does it exhibit to ask or to expect a whole community to give up and labor for the temporal happiness of others, after themselves shall be consigned to the dust, a majority of which com-

munity take no pains whatever to secure their own eternal welfare at no more distant day!

Great distance in either time or space has wonderful power to lull and render quiescent the human mind. Pleasures to be enjoyed or pains to be endured, after we shall be dead and gone, are but little regarded even in our own cases, and much less in the cases of others. Still, in addition to this there is something so ludicrous in promises of good or threats of evil a great way off as to render the whole subject with which they are connected easily turned into ridicule. "Better lay down that spade you are stealing, Paddy; if you don't you'll pay for it at the day of judgment." "Be the powers, if ye'll credit me so long I'll jist take another."

Address before the Springfield Washingtonian Temperance Society. Feb., 1842.

The Spirit of a Highly Moved People in Time of War

FONDLY do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by *the bondsman's* two hundred and fifty years

of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Second Inaugural Address. March 4, 1865.

The Part Played by the People in the Civil War

YOU say that you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively, to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge *you* to continue fighting, it will be an

resistance to you. Do you think differe
I thought that whatever negroes can b
to do as soldiers, leaves just so much les
white soldiers to do in saving the Union.
it appear otherwise to you? But neg
like other people, act upon motives.
should they do anything for us if we wil
nothing for them? If they stake their
for us they must be prompted by the stron
motive, even the promise of freedom.
the promise, being made, must be kept.

The signs look better. The Father
Waters again goes unvexed to the sea. Tha

The job was a great national one, and let none be slighted who have an honorable part in it.

And while those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely and well done than at Antietam, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg, and on many fields of less note. Nor must Uncle Sam's wet feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present; not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks. Thanks to all. For the great Republic—for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future—thanks to all.

Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among freemen there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet, and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose

The Part Played by the People in the Civil War

their case and pay the cost. And there will be some black men who can remember that with silent tongue, and clinched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while I fear there will be some white ones unable to forget that with malignant heart and deceitful speech they have striven to hinder it.

Letter to J. C. Conkling. Aug. 26, 1863.

The Will of God Prevails

THE will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both *may* be and one *must* be wrong. God cannot be *for* and *against* the same thing at the same time. In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is possibly true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. *By His mere* great power on the minds of the

new contestants, He could have either *saved* or *destroyed* the claim without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun, He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.

A Meditation, written, Sept., 1862.

A Taste for Reading

A CAPACITY and taste for reading gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so; it gives a relish and facility for successfully pursuing the unsolved ones.

. . . The thought recurs that education—cultivated thought—can best be combined with agricultural labor, or any labor, on the principle of thorough work; that careless, half-performed, slovenly work makes no place for such combination; and thorough work, again, renders sufficient the smallest quantity of ground to each man; and this, again, conforms to what must occur in a world less inclined to wars and more devoted to the arts of

peace than heretofore. Population must increase rapidly, more rapidly than in former times, and ere long the most valuable of all arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable subsistence from the smallest area of soil. No community whose every member possesses this art can ever be the victim of oppression in any of its forms. Such community will be alike independent of crowned kings, money kings, and land kings.

. . . It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, "And this, too, shall pass away." How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction! "And this, too, shall pass away." And yet, let us hope, it is not quite true. Let us hope, rather, that by the best cultivation of the physical world beneath and around us, and the intellectual and moral world within us, we shall secure an individual, social, and political prosperity *and happiness*, whose course shall be onward

and upward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away.

Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, at Milwaukee. Sept. 30, 1859.

To Rise in Life

THE way for a young man to rise is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that anybody wishes to hinder him. Allow me to assure you that suspicion and jealousy never did help any man in any situation. There may sometimes be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed, too, if he allow his mind to be diverted from the true channel to brood over the attempted injury. Cast about and see if this feeling has not injured every person you have ever known to fall into it.

Letter to W. H. Herndon. July 10, 1848.

Penitence

"WHEN a man is sincerely *penitent* for his misdeeds, and gives satisfactory evidence of the same, he can safely be pardoned, and there is no exception to the rule."

The Amnesty Proclamation.

On Interviews

"AH, yes!" said Mr. Lincoln gravely—and his words on this matter are important as illustrating a rule of his action, and to some extent, perhaps, the essentially representative character of his mind and of his administration—"ah, yes, such things do very well for you military people, with your arbitrary rule, and in your camps. But the office of President is essentially a civil one, and the affair is very different. For myself, I feel—though the tax on my time is heavy—that no hours of my day are better employed than those which thus bring me again within the direct contact and atmosphere of the average of our whole people. Men moving only in an official circle are apt to become merely official —not to say arbitrary—in their ideas, and apter and apter, with each passing day, to forget that they only hold power in a representative capacity. Now this is all wrong. I go into these promiscuous receptions of all who claim to have business with me twice eacl week, and every applicant for audience has t take his turn, as if waiting to be shaved in *barber's shop*. Many of the matters brou

to my notice are utterly frivolous, but others are of more or less importance, and all serve to renew in me a clearer and more vivid image of that great popular assemblage out of which I sprang, and to which at the end of two years I must return. 'I tell you, Major,' he said, appearing at this point to recollect I was in the room, for the former part of these remarks had been made with half-shut eyes, as if in soliloquy, 'I tell you that I call these receptions my "*public-opinion baths*"; for I have but little time to read the papers and gather public opinion that way; and though they may not be pleasant in all their particulars, the effect, as a whole, is renovating and invigorating to my perceptions of responsibility and duty.'"

Sympathy for our Fellow Men

FROM the first appearance of man upon the earth down to very recent times, the words "stranger" and "enemy" were quite or almost synonymous. Long after civilized nations had defined robbery and murder as high crimes, and had affixed severe punish-

ments to them, when practiced among an upon their own people respectively, it was deemed no offense, but even meritorious, to rob and murder and enslave strangers, whether as nations or as individuals. Even yet, this has not totally disappeared. The man of the highest moral cultivation, in spite of all which abstract principle can do, likes him whom he does know much better than him whom he does not know. To correct the evils, great and small, which spring from want of sympathy and from positive enmity among strangers, as nations or as individuals, is one of the highest functions of civilization.

Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, at Milwaukee. Sept. 30, 1859.

Lawyers and the Law

DISCOURAGE litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser—in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peace-maker the *lawyer* has a superior opportunity of being a

good man. There will still be business enough. . . . Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife, and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.

Fragment: Notes for a Law Lecture. July 1, 1850.

God's Will

THE will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably

true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the new contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.

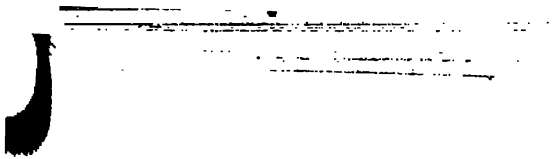
Meditation on the Divine Will.

Lincoln the Christian

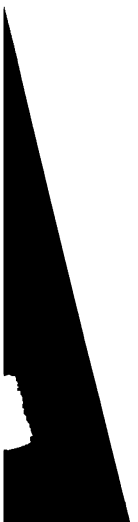
"ON an occasion I shall never forget," says the Hon. H. C. Demig, of Connecticut, "the conversation turned upon religious subjects, and Mr. Lincoln made this impressive remark: 'I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership,' he continued, 'the Saviour's condensed *statement* of the substance of both Law and

Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul.'"

Lincoln the Christian.



AMERICA AND ITS PEOPLE



IN the great journal of things happening under the sun, we, the American people, find our account running under date of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth as regards extent of territory, fertility of the soil, and salubrity of climate. We find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions conducing more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty than any of which the history of former times tells us. We, when mounting the stage of existence, found ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them; they are a legacy bequeathed us by a once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed, race of ancestors. Theirs was the task (and nobly they performed it) to possess themselves, and through themselves us, of this godly land, and to uprear upon its hills and its valleys a political edifice of liberty and equal rights; 'tis ours only to transmit these—the former unprofaned by the foot of an invader, the

The Building of the American Nation

latter undecayed by the lapse of time and untorn by usurpation—to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know. This task gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, duty to posterity, and love for our species in general, all imperatively require us faithfully to perform.

An address delivered before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill. Jan. 27, 1837.

Reverence for Law the Best Preservative for American Nationality

THE question recurs, "How shall we fortify against it?" The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of our seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor—let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to *tear the* charter of his own and his children's

liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in the schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay of all our sexes and tongues and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.

An address delivered before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill. Jan. 27, 1837.

Reason Molded into a Reverence for the Constitution is America's Finest Safeguard for Liberty

I DO not mean to say that all the scenes of the Revolution are now or ever will be entirely forgotten, but that, like everything else, they must fade from the memory of the world, and grow more and more dim by the lapse of time. In history, we hope, they will be read of, and recounted, so long as the Bible shall be read; but even granting that they will, their influence cannot be what it heretofore

Reason Molded into a Reverence for the Constitution is America's Finest Safeguard for Liberty

has been. Even then they cannot be so universally known nor so vividly felt as they were by the generation just gone to rest. At the close of that struggle, nearly every adult male had been a participator in some of its scenes. The consequence was that of those scenes, in the form of a husband, a father, a son, or a brother, a living history was to be found in every family, a history bearing the indubitable testimonies of its own authenticity, in the limbs mangled, in the scars of wounds received, in the midst of the very scenes related—a history, too, that could be read and understood alike by all, the wise and the ignorant, the learned and the unlearned. But those histories are gone. They can be read no more forever. They were a fortress of strength; but what invading foemen could never do, the silent artillery of time has done—the levelling of its walls. They are gone. They were a forest of giant oaks; but the all restless hurricane has swept over them, and left only here and there a lonely trunk, despoiled of its verdure, shorn of its foliage, *unshading* and unshaded, to murmur i

few more gentle breezes, to combat with its mutilated limbs a few more ruder storms, then to sink and be no more.

They were pillars of the temple of liberty; and now that they have crumbled away that temple must fall unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of their sober reason. Passion has helped us, but can do so no more. It will in future be our enemy. Reason—cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason—must furnish all the materials for our future support and defense. Let those materials be molded into general intelligence, sound morality, and, in particular, a reverence for the Constitution and laws; and that we improved to the last, that we remained free to the last, that we revered his name to the last, that during his long sleep we permitted no hostile foot to pass over or desecrate his resting place, shall be that which to learn the last trump shall awaken our Washington.

Upon these let the proud fabric of freedom rest, as the rock of its basis; and as truly as has been said of the only greater institution,

Reason Molded into a Reverence for the Constitution is America's Finest Safeguard for Liberty

"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

An address delivered before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill. January 27, 1837.

Self-interest the Prime Motive

THE plainest print cannot be read through a gold eagle; and it will be ever hard to find many men who will send a slave to Liberia, and pay his passage while they can send him to a new country—Kansas, for instance—and sell him for fifteen hundred dollars and the rise.

Speech in Springfield, Ill. June 26, 1857.

Labor and Slavery

EQUALITY in society alike beats inequality, whether the latter be of the British aristocrat sort or of the domestic slavery sort. We know Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired laborers amongst us. How little they know whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. Twenty *five years ago* I was a hired laborer.

hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account to-day, and will hire others to labor for him to-morrow. Advancement—improvement in condition—is the order of things in a Society of equals. As labor is the common burden of our race, so the efforts of some to shift their share of the burden on to the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race. Originally a curse for transgression upon the whole race, when, as by slavery, it is concentrated on a part only, it becomes the double-refined curse of God upon His creatures.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful. The slavemaster himself has a conception of it, and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with a lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will ask him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope for the rod. And yet perhaps it does not occur to you that

to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system and adopted the free system of labor.

Fragment on Slavery. July 1, 1854.

THE man who produces a good, full crop will scarcely ever let any part of it go to waste; he will keep up the inclosure about it, and allow neither man nor beast to trespass upon it; he will gather it in due season, and store it in perfect security. Thus he labors with satisfaction, and saves himself the whole fruit of his labor. The other, starting with no purpose for a full crop, labors less, and with less satisfaction, allows his fences to fall, and cattle to trespass, gathers not in due season, or not at all. Thus the labor he has performed is wasted away, little by little, till in the end he derives scarcely anything from it.

The ambition for broad acres leads to poor farming, even with men of energy. I scarcely ever knew a mammoth farm to sustain itself much less to return a profit upon the ou I have more than once known a man to *a respectable* fortune upon one, fail, ar

it, and then some man of modest aims get a small fraction of the ground, and make a good living upon it. Mammoth farms are like tools or weapons which are too heavy to be handled; ere long they are thrown aside at a great loss.

Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, at Milwaukee. Sept. 30, 1859.

The Laborer and his Labor

IN the early days of our race the Almighty said to the first of our race, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"; and since then, if we accept the light and the air of heaven, no good thing has been or can be enjoyed by us without having first cost labor. And inasmuch as most good things are produced by labor, it follows that all such things of right belong to those whose labor has produced them. But it has so happened, in all ages of the world, that some have labored, and others have without labor enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong, and should not continue. To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as

nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government.

Letter to Joshua F. Speed. Oct. 22, 1846.

Assert what you Must

IN Law it is good policy never to plead what you need not, lest you oblige yourself to prove what you cannot.

Letter to U. F. Linder. Feb. 20, 1848.

Freedom to Slaves and its Meaning to Posterity

FELLOW CITIZENS: We cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve.

We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless.

Annual Message to Congress. Dec. 1, 1862.

Labor and Capital

LABOR is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights. Nor is it denied that there is, and probably always will be, a relation between labor and capital producing mutual benefits. The error is in assuming that the whole labor of the community exists within that relation. A few men own capital, and that few avoid labor themselves, and with their capital hire or buy another few to labor for them. A large majority belong to neither class—neither work for others nor have others working for them.

Labor and Capital

In most of the Southern States a majority of the whole people, of all colors, are neither slaves nor masters; while in the Northern, a large majority are neither hirers nor hired. Men with their families — wives, sons and daughters — work for themselves, on their farms, in their houses, and in their shops, taking the whole product to themselves, and asking no favors of capital on the one hand, nor of hired laborers or slaves on the other. It is not forgotten that a considerable number of persons mingle their own labor with capital —that is, they labor with their own hands and also buy or hire others to labor for them; but this is only a mixed and not a distinct class. No principle stated is disturbed by the existence of this mixed class.

Again, as has already been said, there is not, of necessity, any such thing as the free hired laborer being fixed to that condition, for life. Many independent men everywhere in these States, a few years back in their lives, were hired laborers. The prudent, penniless b ginner in the world labors for wages awh *saves* a surplus with which to buy toc

land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just and generous and prosperous system which opens the way to all—gives hope to all, and consequent energy and progress and improvement of condition to all. No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty—none less inclined to take or touch aught which they have not honestly earned. Let them beware of surrendering a political power which they already possess, and which, if surrendered, will surely be used to close the door of advancement against such as they, and to fix new disabilities and burdens upon them, till all of liberty shall be lost.

Annual Message to Congress. Dec. 3, 1861.

Young America

WE have all heard of Young America. He is the most current youth of the age. Some think him conceited and arrogant; but has he not reason to entertain a rather extensive opinion of himself? Is he not the *inventor* and owner of the present, and sole

the future? Men and things every-
re ministering unto him. Look at his
and you shall see cotton fabrics from
ster and Lowell; flax linen from
wool cloth from Spain; silk from
furs from the Arctic region; with a
robe from the Rocky Mountains, as a
outsider. At his table, besides plain
ıd meat made at home, are sugar from
ıa, coffee and fruits from the tropics,
ı Turk's Island, fish from Newfound-
a from China, and spices from the
The whale of the Pacific furnishes
lle-light, he has a diamond ring from
a gold watch from California, and a
cigar from Havana. He not only has
ıt supply of all these, and much more;
ısands of hands are engaged in pro-
resh supplies, and other thousands in
; them to him. The iron horse is
and impatient to carry him every-
n no time; and the lightning stand
arnessed to take and bring his tidi-
.e less than no time. He owns a
he world, by right of possessing

all the rest by right of wanting it, and intending to have it. As Plato had for the immortality of the soul, so Young America has "a pleasing hope, a fond desire—a longing after" territory. He has a great passion—a perfect rage—for the "new"; particularly new men for office, and the new earth mentioned in the Revelations, in which, being no more sea, there must be about three times as much land as in the present. He is a great friend of humanity; and his desire for land is not selfish, but merely an impulse to extend the area of freedom. He is very anxious to fight for the liberation of enslaved nations and colonies, provided, always, they have land, and have not any liking for his interference. As to those who have no land, and would be glad of help from any quarter, he considers they can afford to wait a few hundred years longer. In knowledge he is particularly rich. He knows all that can possibly be known; inclines to believe in spiritual rappings, and is the unquestioned inventor of "Manifest Destiny." His horror is for all that is old, particularly "Old Fogy"; and if there be any-

Young America

thing old which he can endure, it is only old whisky and old tobacco.

Address delivered before the Springfield Library Association. Feb. 22, 1860.

The Stars of the American Flag

FELLOW-CITIZENS: I am invited and called before you to participate in raising above Independence Hall the flag of our country, with an additional star upon it. I propose now, in advance of performing this very pleasant and complimentary duty, to say a few words. I propose to say that when the flag was originally raised here, it had but thirteen stars. I wish to call your attention to the fact that, under the blessing of God, each additional star added to that flag has given additional prosperity and happiness to the country, until it has advanced to its present condition; and its welfare in the future, as well as in the past, is in your hands. Cultivating the spirit that animated our fathers, who gave renown and celebrity to this hall, cherishing that fraternal feeling which has so long *characterized* us as a nation, excluding [illegible]

ill temper, and precipitate action on all occasions, I think we may promise ourselves that not only the new star placed upon that flag shall be permitted to remain there to our permanent prosperity for years to come, but additional ones shall from time to time be placed there until we shall number, as it was anticipated by the great historian, five hundred millions of happy and prosperous people.

Address on raising a flag over Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Feb. 22, 1861.

The Disregard for Law a Grave Danger

I HOPE I am over-wary; but if I am not, there is even now something of ill omen amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country — the growing disposition to substitute the wild and curious passions in lieu of the sober judgment of courts, and the worse than savage mobs for the executive ministers of justice. This disposition is awfully fearful in any community; and that it now exists in ours, though grating to our feelings to admit, it would be a violation of truth and an insult to our intelligence to deny. Accounts of outrages

he every-day news

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swear by the blood
to violate in the
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to the support of
ndence, so to the
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o tear the charter

political religion of the Nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and gay of all sexes and tongues and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.

The Disregard for Law a Grave Danger

While ever a state of feeling such as this shall universally or even very generally prevail throughout the Nation, vain will be every effort, and fruitless every attempt, to subvert our national freedom.

When I so pressingly urge a strict observance of all the laws, let me not be understood as saying that there are no bad laws, or that grievances may not arise for the redress of which no legal provisions have been made. I mean to say no such thing. But I do mean to say that although bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible, still, while they continue in force, for the sake of example, they should be religiously observed. So also in unprovided cases. If such arise let proper legal provisions be made for them with the least possible delay, but then let them, if not too intolerable, be borne *with.*

The Disregard for Law a Grave Danger

There is no grievance that is a n[illegible] redress by mob law. In any case that may arise, as, for instance, the promulgation of abolitionism, one of two positions is necessarily true—that is, the thing is right within itself, and therefore deserves the protection of all law and all good citizens, or it is wrong, and therefore proper to be prohibited by legal enactments; and in neither case is the interposition of mob law either necessary, justifiable, or excusable.

But it may be asked, "Why suppose danger to our political institutions? Have we not preserved them for more than fifty years? And why may we not for fifty times as long?"

We hope there is no sufficient reason. We hope all danger may be overcome; but to conclude that no danger may ever arise would itself be extremely dangerous. There are now, and will hereafter be, many causes dangerous in their tendency, which have n existed hithertofore, and which are not insignificant to merit attention. That government should have been maintai *its original form*, from its establishme

now, is not much to be wondered at. It had many props to support it through that period, which now are decayed and crumbled away. Through that period it was felt by all to be an undecided experiment; now it is understood to be a successful one. Then, all that sought celebrity and fame and distinction expected to find them in the success of that experiment. Their all was staked upon it; their destiny was inseparably linked with it. Their ambition aspired to display before an admiring world a practical demonstration of the truth of a proposition which had hitherto been considered at best no better than problematical—namely, the capability of a people to govern themselves. If they succeeded they were to be immortalized; their names were to be transferred to Counties, and Cities, and Rivers, and Mountains; and to be revered and sung, toasted through all time. If they failed, they were to be called names, and fools, and fanatics for a fleeting hour; then to sink and be forgotten. They succeeded. The experiment is successful, and thousands have won their deathless names in making it so. But

The Disregard for Law a Grave Danger

the crop is already up
reapers will arise and they too will s
field.

Address before The Young Men's Lyce
Springfield, Ill. Jan. 27, 1837.

licial
ions

JUDICIAL decisions have two uses—
to absolutely determine the case de
and secondly, to indicate to the publi
other similar cases will be decided whe
arise. For the latter use they are
"precedents" and "authorities". .
believe in obedience to and respect
judicial department of government. W
its decision on constitutional question
fully settled, should control, not only
but the genera

FELLOW-CITIZENS: I am very glad indeed to see you to-night, and yet I will not say I thank you for this call; but I do most sincerely thank Almighty God for the occasion on which you have called. How long ago is it?—eighty-odd years since, on the Fourth of July, for the first time in the history of the world, a nation, by its representatives, assembled and declared, as a self-evident truth, "that all men are created equal." That was the birthday of the United States of America. Since then the Fourth of July has had several very peculiar recognitions. The two men most distinguished in the framing and support of the Declaration were Thomas Jefferson and John Adams—the one having penned it and the other sustained it the most forcibly in debate—the only two of the fifty-five who signed it that were elected Presidents of the United States. Precisely fifty years after they put their hands to the paper, it pleased Almighty God to take both from this stage of action. This was indeed an extraordinary and remarkable event in our history. Another President, five years after, was called from this stage of existence

The Fourth of July

and army on that very day. And not
but in a succession of battles in Penn
near to us, through three days, so
fought that they might be called or
battle, on the first, second, and thir
month of July; and on the fourth the
of those who opposed the Declaration
men are created equal "turned tail" a
Gentlemen, this is a glorious theme,
occasion for a speech, but I am not p
to make one worthy of the occasion.
like to speak in terms of praise due
many brave officers and soldiers wh

Recent events bring up glorious names, and particularly prominent ones; but these I will not mention.

Remarks on notable Fourths of July, in response to a serenade. July 7, 1863.

A Versatile Man

"'VERSATILITY,' replied the President, "is an injurious possession, since it never can be greatness. It misleads you in your calculations from its very agreeability, and it inevitably disappoints you in any great trust from its want of depth. A versatile man, to be safe from execration, should never soar; mediocrity is sure of detection."

Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home.

The Bible

IN regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man.

All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here

and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.

Remarks upon the Holy Scriptures, in receiving the present of a Bible from a Negro delegation. Sept. 7, 1864.

Equality of Man as Understood by the Authors of the Declaration of Independence

I THINK the authors of that noble instru ment intended to include all men; b they did intend to declare all men equal in respects. They did not mean to say all w equal in color, size, intellect, moral deve ment, or social capacity. They defined tolerable distinctness in what respects the consider all men created equal—equa "certain inalienable rights, among wh life, liberty, and the pursuit of hap This they said, and this they meant did not mean to assert the obvious that all were then actually enjo equality, nor yet that they were abou it immediately upon them. In fac no power to confer such a boon. simply to declare the right, so that ment of it might follow as fas *stances* should permit. They

up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere. The assertion that "all men are created equal" was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration not for that but for future use. Its authors meant it to be as, thank God, it is now proving itself, a stumbling block to all those who in after times might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful paths of despotism. They knew the proneness of prosperity to breed tyrants, and they meant when such should reappear in this fair land and commence their vocation, they should find left for them at least one hard nut to crack.

Speech at Springfield, Ill. June 26, 1867.

Equality of Man as Understood by the Authors of the Declaration of Independence

and will ever continue to stru
is the common right of humani
the divine right of kings.
principle in whatever shape it
It is the same spirit that says, '
toil and earn bread, and I'l
matter in what shape it comes
the mouth of a king who seeks
people of his own nation and l
of their labor, or from one rac
apology for enslaving another
same tyrannical principle.

Lincoln-D

fairest portion of the earth as regards extent of territory, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate. We find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions conducing more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty than any of which the history of former times tells us. We, when mounting the stage of existence, found ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them; they are a legacy bequeathed us by a once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed, race of ancestors. Theirs was the task (and nobly they performed it) to possess themselves, and through themselves us, of this goodly land, and to uprear upon its hills and its valleys a political edifice of liberty and equal rights; 'tis ours only to transmit these—the former unprofaned by the foot of an invader, the latter undecayed by the lapse of time and untorn by usurpation—to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know. This task of gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, duty to posterity, and love for our

Present State of American People

The Results of the American Revolution

I DO not mean to say that the memories of the Revolution are now or ever will be entirely forgotten, but that, like everything else they must fade upon the memory of the world and grow more and more dim by the lapse of time. In history, we hope, they will be read of, and recounted, so long as the Bible shall be read; but even granting that they will their influence cannot be what it heretofore has been. Even then they cannot be so universally known nor so vividly felt as they were by the generation just gone to rest. At the close of that struggle, nearly every adult male had been a participator in some of its scenes. The consequence was that of the scenes, in the form of a husband, a father, son, or a brother, a living history was found in every family—a history bearing *indubitable* testimonies of its own

n the limbs mangled, in the scars of wounds received, in the midst of the very scenes related—a history, too, that could be read and understood alike by all, the wise and the ignorant, the learned and the unlearned. But those histories are gone. They can be read no more forever. They were a fortress of strength; but what invading foeman could never do the silent artillery of time has done—the levelling of its walls. They are gone. They were a forest of giant oaks; but the all-restless hurricane has swept over them, and left only here and there a lonely trunk, despoiled of its verdure, shorn of its foliage, unshading and unshaded, to murmur in a few more gentle breezes, and to combat with its mutilated limbs a few more ruder storms, then to sink and be no more.

They were pillars in the temple of liberty; and now that they have crumbled away that temple must fall unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason. Passion has helped us, but can do so no more. It will in future be our enemy. Reason—

The Results of the American Revolution

cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason—must furnish all the materials for our future support and defence. Let these materials be moulded into general intelligence, sound morality, and in particular a reverence for the Constitution and laws; and that we improved to the last, that we remained free to the last, that we revered his name to the last, that during his long sleep we permitted no hostile foot to pass over or desecrate his resting-place, shall be that which to learn when the last trump shall awaken our Washington.

Upon these let the proud fabric of freedom rest, as the rock of its basis; and as truly as has been said of the only greater institution, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Address before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Ill. Jan. 27, 1837.

Liberty

THE world has never had a good definiti of the word liberty, and the Amer people, just now, are much in want o *We all* declare for liberty; but in us

same *word* we do not all mean the same *thing*. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name, liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incomparable names—liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his *liberator*; while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails to-day among us human creatures, even in the North, and all professing to love liberty.

Address at Sanitary Fair. Baltimore, April 18, 1864.

Civil War

the inaugural address was being deliv
this place, devoted altogether to *sa*
Union without war, insurgent agent
the city seeking to *destroy* it witho
seeking to dissolve the Union and divi
by negotiation. Both parties deprec
but one of them would *make* war ra
let the nation survive, and the oth
accept war rather than let it perish
war came.

Second Inaugural Address. Marc

The Falls of Niagara

NIAGARA FALLS! By what r
power is it that millions an
are drawn from all parts of the wo
upon Niagara Falls? There is n

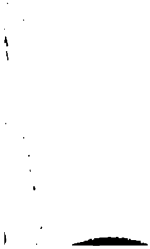
hunded feet in descent in the bottom of the river, it is plain the water will have a violent and continuous plunge at that point. It is also plain, the water, thus plunging, will foam and roar, and send up a mist continuously, in which last, during sunshine, there will be perpetual rainbow. The mere physical of Niagara Falls is only this. Yet this is really a very small part of that world's wonder. Its power to excite reflection and emotion is its great charm. Geologists will demonstrate that the plunge, or fall, was once at Lake Ontario, and has worn its way back to its present position; he will ascertain how fast it is wearing now, and so get a basis for determining how long it has been wearing back from Lake Ontario, and finally demonstrate by it that this world is at least 14,000 years old. A philosopher of a slightly different turn will say: "Niagara Falls is only the lip of the basin out of which pours all the surplus water which rains down on two or three hundred thousand square miles of the earth's surface." He will estimate with approximate accuracy that five hundred thousand tons of water fall

contemplation of this vast power the sun is constantly exerting in the quiet, noiseless operation of lifting water up to be rained down again.

But still there is more. It calls up the indefinite past. When Columbus first sought this Continent—when Christ suffered on the cross—when Moses led Israel through the Red Sea—nay, even when Adam first came from the hand of his Maker: then, as now, Niagara was roaring here. The eyes of that species of extinct giants whose bones fill the *mounds* of America have gazed on Niagara

as ours do now. Contemporary with the first race of men, and older than the first man, Niagara is strong and fresh to-day as ten thousand years ago. The Mammoth and Mastodon, so long dead that fragments of their monstrous bones alone testify that they ever lived, have gazed on Niagara—in that long, long time never still for a single moment (never dry), never froze, never stopped, never rested.

Fragment Notes for a Lecture. July 1, 1850.



NATIONAL

Self-government

I TRUST I understand and truly estimate the right of self-government. My faith in the proposition that each man should do precisely as he pleases with all which is exclusively his own, lies at the foundation of the sense of justice there is in me. I extend the principle to communities of men as well as individuals. I so extend it because it is politically wise and well as naturally just; politically wise in saving us from broils about matters which do not concern us. Here, or at Washington, I would not trouble myself with the oyster laws of Virginia, or the cranberry law of Indiana. The doctrine of self-government is right—absolutely and eternally right—but it has no just application as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such application depends upon whether a negro is not or is a man. If he is not a man, in that case he who is a man may as a matter of self-government do just as he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he, too, shall not govern himself? When the white man governs

Self-government

himself, that is self-government; l
governs himself and governs an
that is more than self-governme
despotism. If the negro is a ma
my ancient faith teaches me th
are created equal," and that the
moral right in connection with
making a slave of another.

Judge Douglas frequently, with
and sarcasm, paraphases our a
saying: "The white people of N
good enough to govern themselv
are not good enough to govern a fe
negroes!"

Well! I doubt not that the
Nebraska are and will continue t
as the average of people elsewher
say to the contrary. What I do s
man is good enough to govern a
without that other's consent. I s
leading principle, the sheet-ancho
can Republicanism. Our Dec
Independence says:

"We hold these truths to be
that all men are created equal; t

endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

Speech at Peoria, Ill. in reply to Senator Douglas. Oct. 16, 1854.

The Object of Government

THE legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities. In all that people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere. The desirable things which the individuals of a people cannot do, or cannot well do, for themselves, fall into two classes: those which have relations to wrongs, and those which do not. Each of these branch off into an infinite variety of subdivision.

The first—that in relation to wrong—embraces all crimes, misdemeanors, and non-

IT is often urged that to ... money will be more secure in a nation... bank than in the hands of individuals, as proposed in the sub-treasury, is to say that bank directors and bank officers are more honest than sworn officers of the government. Not so. We insist on no such thing. We say that public officers, selected with reference to their capacity and honesty (which by the way we deny is the practice in these days), stand an equal chance, precisely of being capable and honest with bank officers selected by the same rule. We further say that with much care selections may be made

be some unfaithful and dishonest in both classes. The experience of the whole world, in all bygone times, proves this true. The Saviour of the world chose twelve disciples, and even one of that small number, selected by superhuman wisdom, turned out a traitor and a devil. And it may not be improper here to add that Judas carried the bag—was the sub-treasurer of the Saviour and His disciples.

Speech at a Political Discussion in the Hall of the House of Representatives at Springfield, Ill. Dec. 20, 1839.

The Tariff

WE repeat, then, that a tariff sufficient for revenue, or a direct tax, must soon be resorted to; and, indeed, we believe this alternative is now denied by no one. But which system shall be adopted? Some of our opponents, in theory, admit the propriety of a tariff sufficient for a revenue; but even they will not in practice vote for such a tariff; while others boldly advocate direct taxation. Inasmuch, therefore, as some of them boldly advocate direct taxation and all the rest—or

till they can assure -
will tolerate it. Let us, then, briefl
the two systems. The tariff is th
system, because the duties being c
large parcels at a few commercial p
require comparatively few officer
collection; while by the direct-tax
land must be literally covered wit
and collectors, going forth like
Egyptian locusts, devouring ever
grass and other green thing. An
the tariff system the whole revenu
the consumers of foreign goods
chiefly the luxuries, and not the n

system the burthen of revenue falls almost entirely on the wealthy and luxurious few, while the substantial and laboring many who live at home, and upon home products, go entirely free. By the direct-tax system none can escape. However strictly the citizen may exclude from his premises all foreign luxuries—fine cloths, fine silks, rich wines, golden chains, and diamond rings—still, for the possession of his house, his barn, and his homespun, he is to be perpetually haunted and harassed by the tax-gatherer. With these views we leave it to be determined whether we or our opponents are the more truly democratic on the subject.

Circular from Whig Committee. March 4, 1843.

Things Evil and Things Good

THE true rule, in determining to embrace or reject anything, is not whether it have any evil in it, but whether it have more of evil than of good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of government policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our

best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded.

Speech in the United States House of Representatives. June 20, 1848.

The Prize of American Citizenship

I ALMOST always feel inclined, when I happen to say anything to soldiers, to impress upon them, in a few brief remarks, the importance of success in this contest. It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come, that we should perpetuate for our children's children that great and free government which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember this, not merely for my sake, but for yours. I happen, temporarily, to occupy this White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each one of you may have, through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence; that you may all
equal privileges in the race of life, with
desirable human aspirations. It is
the struggle should be maintained

may not lose our birthright—not only for one, but for two or three years. The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.

Address to the 166th Ohio Regiment. Aug. 22, 1864.

Lincoln on his Nomination

BUT I do not allow myself to suppose that either the Convention or the League have concluded to decide that I am either the greatest or best man in America, but rather they have concluded that it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse that they might not make a botch of it in trying to swap.

Extract from Reply to a Delegation from the National Union League. June 9, 1864.

National Supremacy

THE point made against the theory of the General Government being only an agency whose principles are the States was new to me, and, as I think, is one of the best arguments for the national supremacy.

Letter to Edward Everett. Nov. 20, 1863.

to the extent of ...
racy.

War

WAR in any case is as exceptiona
the habits as it is revolting f
sentiments of the American people.
defense of national life is not immo
war in defense of independence is an i
part of the discipline of nations.

Diplomatic Dispatch to Minister
May 21, 1861.

Op-
posing ...

A HOUSE divided against itse
stand. I believe this g
...ently half slav

further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new—North as well as South.

Speech at Springfield. Ill.

The Questions Presented by the Civil War

IT presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic or democracy—a government of the people by the same people—can or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few in number to control administration according to organic law in any case, can always, upon the pretences made in this case, or on any other pretences, or arbitrarily without any pretence, break up their government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth. It forces us to ask: Is there in all republics this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a government, of necessity, be too strong

[redacted]

:, or too weak

ecial Session.

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speak not of the
the Union by
he bond, we all
owever, a State
ion with it. I
nary right of a
than itself, and
tself. If a State
, should be equal
ual in number of
atter of principle,

truant is
its peopl
low-citizen
merely ask
Remark
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eman
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truant is conferred on a district of country with its people, by merely calling it a State? Fellow-citizens, I am not asserting anything; I am merely asking questions for you to consider.

Remarks to the Indiana Legislature at Indianapolis. Feb. 12, 1861.

The Meaning of the Reception Given to Lincoln's Election

THIS reception, like all the others that have been tendered to me, doubtless emanates from all the political parties, and not from one alone. As such I accept it the more gratefully, since it indicates an earnest desire on the part of the whole people, without regard to political differences, to save, not the country because the country will save itself—but to save the institutions of the country—those institutions under which, in the last three quarters of a century, we have grown to a great, an intelligent, and a happy people—the greatest, the most intelligent, and the happiest people in the world. These noble manifestations indicate, with unerring certainty, that the whole people are willing to make common cause for this object; that if, as it ever must be, some have been successful

favor of ...
running it through the tempest in sa
willing, if they think the people ha
mitted an error in their verdict now, t
the hope of reversing it, and setting
next time. I do not say that in th
election the people did the wisest th
could have been done; indeed, I do n
they did; but I do say that in acce
great trust committed to me, which I
a determination to endeavor to prov
of it, I must rely upon you, upon the
the whole country, for support; and
sustaining aid, even I, humble as I a
fail to carry the ship of state safe
the storm.

... N. Y.

only the great city of New York, but the whole country, has acquired its greatness), unless it would be that thing for which the Union itself was made. I understand that the ship is made for the preservation and carrying of the cargo; and so long as the ship is safe with the cargo, it shall not be abandoned. This Union shall never be abandoned, unless the possibility of its existence shall cease to exist without the necessity of throwing passengers and cargo overboard. So long, then, as it is possible that the prosperity and liberties of this people can be preserved within this Union, it shall be my purpose at all times to preserve it.

Reply to the Mayor of New York City. Feb. 20, 1861.

The United States as a United Nation

A NATION may be said to consist of its territory, its people, and its laws. The territory is the only part which is of certain durability. "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." It is of the first importance duly consider and estimate this ever-

enduring part. That portion of the earth's surface which is owned and inhabited by the people of the United States is well adapted to be the home of one national family, and it is not well adapted for two or more. . . . There is no line, straight or crooked, suitable for a national boundary upon which to divide. Our national strife springs not from our permanent part; not from the land we inhabit; not from our national homestead. There is no possible severing of this but would multiply and not mitigate evils among us. In all its adaptations and aptitudes it demands union and abhors separation.

Annual Message to Congress. *Dec.* 1, 1862.

On Amending the Constitution

AS a general rule I think we would much better let it alone. No slight occasion should tempt us to touch it. Better not take the first step, which may lead to a habit of altering it. Better, rather, habituate ourselves to think of it as unalterable. It can scarcely be made better than it is. New [illegible] visions would introduce new difficulties, and *thus* create and increase appetite

change. No, sir; let it stand as it is. New hands have never touched it. The men who made it have done their work, and have passed away. Who shall improve on what they did?

Speech in the House of Repesentatives. June 20, 1848.

Government by Majority

IF the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the Government is acquiescence on the one side or the other.

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority.

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a true people. Whoever rejects it does, of

is all that is left.

First Inaugural Address. Ma

The Bulwark of American Liberty and Independence

WHAT constitutes the bulv
own liberty and indepe
is not our frowning battlements,
sea-coasts, our army and our n
are not our reliance against tyra
these may be turned against us wi
us weaker for the struggle. O
in the love of liberty which Go
in us. Our defense is in the
prizes liberty as the heritage of
lands everywhere. Destroy th

become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you.

Fragment of a Speech at Edwardsville, Ill. Sept. 13, 1858.

The Status of the States is in the Union

THE States have their status in the Union, and they have no other legal status. If they break from this, they can only do so against law and by revolution. The Union, and not themselves separately, procured their independence and their liberty. By conquest or purchase the Union gave each of them whatever of independence or liberty it has. The Union is older than any of the States, and, in fact, it created them as States. Originally some dependent colonies made the Union, and, in turn, the Union threw off their old dependence for them, and made them States, such as they are. Not one of them ever had a State constitution independent of the Union. Of course, it is not forgotten that all the new States framed their Constitutions before they entered the Union—nevertheless, dependent upon and preparatory to coming into the Union.

Unquestionably the States have the
and rights reserved to them in and
national Constitution; but among these
are not included all conceivable
however mischievous or destructive,
most, such only as were known in the
at the time as government powers; a
tainly a power to destroy the governme
had never been known as a governi
as a merely administrative power.
relative matter of national power an
rights, as a principle, is no other th
principle of generality and locality.
ever concerns the whole should be c
to the whole—to the general government
whatever concerns only the State sh
left exclusively to the State.

Message to Congress, in Special S
July 4, 1861.

The Constitution and the Rights of the States

I DO not desire any amendment of th
stitution. Recognizing, however,
questions of such amendment rightfu
long to the American people, I shou
feel justified nor inclined to withhol

em if I could a fair opportunity of expressing
eir will thereon through either of the modes
escribed in the instrument.

In addition I declare that the maintenance
violate of the rights of the States, and es-
cially the right of each State to order and
ntrol its own domestic institutions accord-
g to its own judgment exclusively, is essen-
l to that balance of powers on which the
rfection and endurance of our political
›ric depend; and I denounce the lawless
asion by armed force of the soil of any
te or Territory, no matter under what
ext, as the gravest of crimes.

Letter to Gen. Duff Green. Dec. 28, 1860.

The Declaration of Independence and its Meaning to the People of the United States

WE are now a mighty nation. We run
our memory back over the pages of
y for about eighty-two years, and we
er that we were then a very small
in point of numbers, vastly inferior
t we are now, with a vastly less extent
ıtry, with vastly less of everything we
lesirable among men; we look upon
nge as exceedingly advantageous to

meaning to the People of the United States

living in that day whose
fathers and grandfathers; they we
they fought for the principle tha
contending for; and we underst
what they did it has followed tha
of prosperity which we now enj
to us. We hold this annual ce
remind ourselves of all the good
process of time, of how it was d
did it, and how we are historica
with it. And we go from thes
better humor with ourselves, v
attached the one to the other, an
bound to the country we inhal

our people who are not descendants at all of these men; they are men who have come from Europe—German, Irish, French, and Scandinavian—men that have come from Europe themselves, or whose ancestors have come and settled here, finding themselves our equals in all things. If they look back through this history to trace their connection with those days of blood, they find they have none. They cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel that they are part of us; but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence, they find that those old men say that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"; and then they feel that the moral sentiment, taught in that day, evidences their relation to those men, that it is the father of all moral principle in them, and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh, of the men who wrote that Declaration; and so they are. That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together,

that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world.

Lincoln's Speech in Reply to Senator Douglas. Chicago, July 10, 1858.

Popular Government in America

OUR popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it our people have already settled—the successful *establishing* and the successful *administering* of it. One still remains—its successful *maintenance* against formidable internal attempts to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world, that those who can fairly carry on an election can also suppress a rebellion; that ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors of bullets; and that when ballots have fairly and constitutionally decided, there can be no successful appeal back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal except to ballots themselves at succeeding elections.

Message to Congress. July 4, 1861.

I AM naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took, that I would to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability, imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government, that action, of which that

The Time for Unconstitutional Measures. The Personal Element in the Ruler of a Republic

The Time for Unconstitutional Measures. The Personal Element in the Ruler of a Republic

Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected; yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful, by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that to the best of my ability I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution altogether. When, early in the war, General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When, in March, and May, *and July*, 1862, I made earnest and successive

averted by that measu
declined the proposition, and I w
best judgment, driven to the alte
either surrendering the Union, an
the Constitution, or of laying stro
upon the colored element. I chose t
In choosing it I hoped for greater g
loss, but of this I was not entirely cc
More than a year of trial now shows
by it in our foreign relations, none in ou
popular sentiment, none in our white n
force, no loss by it anyhow, or anywhe

Letter to A. G. Hodges. April 4, 1

THE Declaration of

holding communities. It is sufficient for our purpose that all of them greatly deplored the evil and that they placed a provision in the Constitution which they supposed would gradually remove the disease by cutting off its source. This was the abolition of the Slave Trade. Now if slavery had been a good thing, would the fathers of the republic have taken a step calculated to diminish its benevolent influences among themselves, and snatch the book wholly from their posterity? These communities by their representatives in old Independence Hall said to the whole world of men: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the Universe. This was their lofty, and wise, and noble understanding
the justice of the Creator to his creat
Yes, gentlemen, to all his creatures, t
whole great family of man. In th
lightened belief, nothing stamped

Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children, their children's children, and the countless myriads who should inhabit the earth in other ages. Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of posterity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great self-evident truths, that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that none but rich men or none but white men, or none but Anglo-Saxon white men, were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of Independence and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began, so that truth and justice and mercy and all the humane and Christian virtues might not be extinguished from the land; so that no man would hereafter dare to limit and circumscribe the great principles

The Great Landmarks of the Declaration of Independence

on which the temple of liberty was being built.

Now, my countrymen, if you have been taught doctrines conflicting with the great landmarks of the Declaration of Independence; if you have listened to suggestion which would take away from its grandeur and mutilate the fair symmetry of its proportions; if you have been inclined to believe that all men are not created equal in those inalienable rights enumerated by our chart of liberty, let me entreat you to come back. Return to the fountain whose waters spring close by the blood of the revolution. Think nothing of me —take no thought for the political fate of any man whomsoever—but come back to the truths that are in the Declaration of Independence—you may do anything with me you choose, if you will but heed these sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an *anxiety* for office. I charge you to drop

every petty and insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. But do not destroy that immortal emblem of Humanity—the Declaration of American Independence.

Lewiston Speech. Aug. 17, 1858.